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The first chapter, the Second Discovery of America, presents this view in outline; and the remaining chapters describe literary movements and individual authors from this standpoint, the literature of the South and the West receiving most attention.

The work was worth doing, though perhaps not at such length, and in some ways it has been done well. American literature from the Civil War to the end of the century is surveyed with a unity and a sweep of view that are illuminating and impressive, and its distinctively American quality for the first time receives due emphasis.

But the book has two serious faults. Ardor for his thesis has caused the author greatly to underrate the amount of Americanism in our literature before 1865, and also to exaggerate the effect of the war, largely ignoring other influences, many of them world-wide. A similar bias results from his theory that good literature must have a "message" and spring from "life", which he practically identifies with contemporary and national life. His judgment of individual works is warped by this theory; he often declares that mediocre poems and tales, which "voice" the life of the times, are "immortal", while of Poe's tales he can say that "they . . . lack sharpness of outline", and of Emily Dickinson's poems, that "they should have been allowed to perish". If he had not been obsessed by his theory, Professor Pattee could never have delivered this solemn judgment on the whimsical Stockton: "He wrote little that touches any of the real problems of his time or that has in it anything to grip or even to move the reader; even his murders are gentle affairs."

There are also more superficial errors and blemishes. The list of twenty-five writers who produced "the new literature from the West and the South" (p. 18) includes six who neither lived in nor wrote of those sections, while Lanier is omitted. On page 381 we learn that most recent American fiction consists of short stories because "he who would deal with crude characters in a bare environment can not prolong his story without danger of attenuation", and Miss Murfree's novels are cited; but on page 315 this explanation of her failure was expressly rejected, and it was pointed out that Hardy "had chosen for his novels a region and a people just as primitive". The style, although in general fresh and strong, often lacks simplicity and naturalness, and is marred by constant use of the stock phrases of current criticism, as "convincing", "compelling", "gripping", "rings true", and "hot from a man's heart". There are a few misprints: *With the Allies* is dated 1814 (p. 384); the youthful Riley is said (p. 325) to have gone about the country with "a patient medicine 'doctor'".

WALTER C. BRONSON.

*The Life and Letters of John Hay.* By WILLIAM ROSCOE THAYER. In two volumes. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1915. Pp. x, 456; 448.)

MR. THAYER warns the reader of his purpose and his limitations. It is a "personal biography" which he has sought to produce, rather

than a "public history". Yet in the case of John Hay the two are inextricably blended. His life was "affected with a public interest". Otherwise it would never have been written on the scale of these volumes. Charming as he was in private, genial in his friendships, skilled with his pen, this full record would not have been required for the man of rather meagre literary output, had he not also been famous as Secretary of State. It is mainly because all that he became by education and experience was poured into the final mould of his work in diplomacy that we are interested to trace his beginnings and progress. Hence it is that the "public history" is necessarily forced upon his biographer. But with it an awkwardness is also forced upon him. For the whole story cannot yet be told. The official archives still jealously guard their secrets. The years of Hay's work at the Department of State cannot be dealt with as Mr. Thayer had previously dealt with the work of Cavour—a thing complete in a time remote, with masses of available material. Consequently, all that he attempts in the *Life of John Hay* is to sketch in a background against which Hay's letters and other utterances may stand out clear.

Mrs. Hay in her lifetime had privately printed copious selections from her husband's letters and diaries. These are naturally Mr. Thayer's chief dependence, though he has enlarged his sources even of this kind. And it is an engaging picture of an original talent that emerges in these pages. Particularly welcome is the light thrown on Hay's family, his Illinois environment, his career at Brown University. Early waking to the consciousness of his own powers—belief in which was common among his boyhood's acquaintances and classmates—John Hay had his period of uncertain feeling after his work in life, concerning which his constitutional tendency, as it appears, to melancholy often made him take despondent views. The Civil War and his good fortune in being appointed one of Lincoln's private secretaries snatched him out of himself and made a man of the youth. Such a great experience could not fail to prepare him, though Hay at the time had but the dimmest apprehension of this, for dealing in a large spirit with important matters of state. On the interval it is not necessary long to dwell. Hay had his contacts with life in Europe, officially and as traveller and lover of art. He early got more of an international mind than most of his generation. Convictions and, if one insists, prejudices were formed in him during those years in which his views of different European nations were forming, which came out later in the Secretary of State. His ventures in literature and in journalism never seem to have taken deep hold on him, though they had their value to him both in the way of shaping the instrument of his style and in winning him warm friendships. It was not till McKinley's election in 1896 that the career was opened to Hay for which all his life had been an unconscious preparation.

Hay's brief service as ambassador to England fell at a critical time, and was, no doubt, useful to his country. Diplomatically he was cor-

rect and successful, socially he was in the way of becoming influential, and in time, he might have been able, by addresses on public occasions and at literary celebrations, to make himself something like an American ambassador to the British people. But as the case stands, it seems an exaggeration for Mr. Thayer to assert that "John Hay's ambassadorship ranks in importance next after that of Charles Francis Adams". A plea could be put in for either Lowell or Phelps or Bayard, before Hay. Certainly the matter is not to be decided by Queen Victoria's saying to Lord Pauncefote that Hay was "the most interesting of all the Ambassadors [meaning, presumably, from the United States] I have known". This might argue merely that Hay had been as adroit as Disraeli in using his pretty talent for flattery at Windsor.

There can be no dispute that to the Department of State Hay brought peculiar aptitudes and capacities. He was cosmopolitan yet downright American. He knew the European point of view, while always ready to maintain that of his own country. In personal diplomatic intercourse he had grace and wit and skill to carry his point. Moreover, there was in him something, as it has been said, of the amateur spirit. He was not an old functionary promoted; he was a man unfettered by a narrow official training, with fresh and even daring ideas, and still with spring and hope enough in him to venture upon new paths. These qualities appear in the two outstanding achievements of John Hay, secretary of state. These are his negotiations to secure the integrity of China, at a time when it looked as if she were to be dismembered, and his triumph in obtaining from Great Britain a surrender of her right to control jointly with the United States the construction and operation of an Isthmian Canal. The former stroke of diplomacy was the more showy. It was audacious, to say the least, to raise an American shield to protect China. The novelty of Hay's procedure left European diplomacy in something like a daze of wonder; and it made, as if in the first moments of surprise, concessions and vague promises which were not perhaps intended to be binding. But the whole made a great sensation at the time and did much to heighten Hay's prestige. But it was the other affair into which he put ability and labor in a way to make both his repute and the results lasting. To have quietly and amicably induced the British Foreign Office to agree to the repeal of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was a work of which any secretary might have been proud, and which was great enough to make the fame of any. In Hay's case, it was attended by many vexations and disappointments. He did not get on well with senators, and resented the way in which they snipped at his handiwork. Upon the rejection by the Senate of the first form of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, the Secretary, in a moment of chagrin, offered his resignation. But President McKinley had the patience necessary in dealing with the Congressional mind, and refused to part with Hay. The end finally crowned the work; and at Panama

a monument will stand to diplomacy, more enduring than any other that easily comes to recollection.

Mr. Thayer is to be thanked for the good taste and fairness and, on the whole, due sense of proportion, with which he has written these volumes. They can hardly rank with his *Life of Cavour*, but the skill and pains which were put into that, appear in this definitive biography of John Hay.

*Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915; an Autobiography.* Prepared for the Massachusetts Historical Society. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1916. Pp. lx, 224.)

THE late Samuel Rawson Gardiner set it down for us, with characteristic sagacity, that the first step toward learning what a man's character was is to discover what he seemed to himself to be. If only it were also the final and conclusive step, every autobiography of a public man would be an invaluable source of historical knowledge, perfectly decisive of many matters now dubious. But alas, the student most devoted to this class of books is forced to confess that they have to be subjected to many drastic processes of winnowing before they become either digestible or nutritious. Too often the autobiography can only be described as a biography by the one witness most fully acquainted with the facts and most certain to misrepresent them. The misrepresentation lies of course on the side of magnifying the writer's qualities and achievements, of showing him to have been always virtuous in a world where others were strangely indifferent to virtue, the one infallibly wise man in a shortsighted generation, a hero uniformly heroic, perhaps uniformly successful. From Tiglathpileser I. to Theodore Roosevelt and Joseph Foraker, the autobiographies of public men worry the reader with their distinct and unfaltering remembrance of having been always right. It is therefore a most refreshing thing to encounter such an autobiography as this of Charles Francis Adams, of which the most outstanding quality is its perfect candor, its freedom from illusions respecting its subject.

At times the candor toward others is somewhat overdone. It is allowable to say that one's father made great blunders about one's education, and ought to have arrived at the court of St. James six weeks earlier than he did—very likely he ought; but there is no need to be quite so frank about the failings of one's colonels, though it makes vivid portraiture. But after all the main matter of the book is the portrait of the author himself. Frans Hals could not have made it more vivid; and to the present reviewer it seems very exact and lifelike, except that Mr. Adams might well have rated his achievements and successes higher, and need not have supposed that the frequent gruffness of his manner had much concealed from those around him the real kindness of his disposition. His remarks on such defects and their results are a little pathetic. Still they are not abject. He was aware,